CHRIST
In the Clouds,
OR
GODS comming to *Iudgement.*

A ſhort Treatiſe, very neceſſary in theſe euill and dangerous times, for all thoſe which deſire that the day of the Lord, may be their day of ioy.

MAR. 13. Verſes 35. 36.

Watch, for yee know not when the Maſter of the houſe will come: whether at Euening, or at mid-night, or at the Cock-crowing, or at the dawning: leſt he come ſuddenly, and finde you ſleeping.

LONDON,
Printed for *F. Coles*, at the vpper end of the Old-Baily, neere Newgate, 1635.

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A Short Treatise, very necessary in these euill and dangerous times, for all those which desire that the day of the Lord, may be their day of ioy.

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Watch, for yee know not when the Master of the house will come: whether at Euening, or at mid-night, or at the Cock-crowing, or at the dawning: lest he come suddenly, and finde you sleeping.

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Christ in the Clouds: or Gods comming to Iudgement.

EPicurisme and Atheisme are two sins most hainous and deadly: the Atheist beléeues there is no God: him David confutes, Doubtles there is a God which iudgeth the earth. The Epicure beléeues there is no Iudgement after Death: him Salomon doth séeme to instruct, Remember that for all these things thou must come to Iudgment. There is no Christian, I think, but beléeues that there shall be a day of Iudgment: But when this day shal come, none knows, for of that day and houre, no man knoweth, neither the Angels of heauen, but my father only. But although no mans reach is able to determine when that day and houre shall be yet it may plainly be demonstrated and shown both from the Prophets and Apostles, that this Iudgement day is nére at hand, & will most suddenly come vpon vs. It is the mercy of the holy Ghost to man in holy Writ to insert these cauéats, and to put man in mind of the Iudgement day, and Mat. 24. 3

three speciall causes.

1 That we may be terrified from sin.

2 That we might be admonished to the true and sincere worship of God.

3 That wee might be strengthened in our faith, lest that great and terrible Day should come upon vs vnawares, and so find vs vnprouided.

Since the foundation of the world, wee know the time; when the dissolution of the world shal be, we are altogether ignorant: yet we may iustly Prophesie and presage thus much, since sinne and impiety is now come to that height, that it can by no succeeding ages be aggrauated, & that vertue and godlinesse are so despised and vilified among impious men, that they can neuer hereafter be lesse esteemed: Who cannot then perceiue, or is so dull sighted, that is not able to apprehend and foresee the dissolution to bee at hand? Now is that Prophesie of Hosea verified; There is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the Land, which appeareth by the cursing, lying, murthers, thefts, and adulteries which now abounde: So that now, as the Prophet Micah hath it: The godly man is perisht from the earth, & there is no iust man among the sons of men. Thus Hosea, Micah, nay all the Prophets do agree in one,

Hosea 4.

Micah. 7.

whereupon saith Saint Ambrose: When righteous men perish from off the face of the earth, the earth must needs perish also, because the godly are the pith & marrow of earth. For as a tree without pith & moisture soone drieth vp, so the present world must needs decay, when the righteous that should vphold it, are not to be found in it: for this cause, as the Prophet Esay hath it: In the City is left desolation, and destruction is in the gates thereof, because of their manifold iniquities.

Christ Jesus himselfe said, As in the dayes before the Flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying, and giuing in marriage, vntill the day of the flood came and tooke them away: So also shall the comming of the Sonne of man be, by reason of prophanesse and too much security. Suppose that this Prophecy shall be fulfilled vpon our present times, and that God will say to vs, as he did to Noah, I will destroy you with the world. O vnhappy and miserable shall that man bee then, that hath not God for his guide. But to the end wee may the better discerne, that we are they, vpon whom the ends of the world must come, there is no better a signe among those which Christ himselfe gaue before, than this: Mat. 24.

Namely, That the Gospell of the Kingdome shall be preached in all the World, for a witnesse to all nations, and then shall the end come. Which is as much as to say according to S. Chrysostome: To accuse and reproue those that would not beleeue the Gospell. The same it is of Hillarie: The Apostles being dispersed throughout all the world, and the Gospell preached, then shall the fall of Ierusalem, and the end be. Neuertheless, there are both learned & vnlearned of this opinion, that since the world, so long after these prophesies, hath continued as before, that the end is not neere, and that the world should continue still immutable; but let them persuere in their opinions. For since S. Ambrose, Cyprian, Chrysostome, and Saint Gregory were of opinion, that since the Gospell, in their time was preached to all Nations, long after their time the world could not endure; surely then it is most probable, that this is the age in which the end must come. Now that we may haue some proofe that the world cannot endure long, because the Gospell is said to bee preached to all Nations; heare Saint Ierome, who was of opinion that there was in his time, no Nation that was ignorant of the Gospell of Christ: for he saith; Although

though they haue no Preacher, yet they cannot but heare the opinion of the Faith of their neighbour Nations.

This Prosper confirmes: No part of the world is without the Gospel of Christ, some of all sorts, and of all Nations haue knowledge of Christ: I could induce a Cloud of opinions: but let Ambrose serue for them all: The Gospell is preached, that the world may be destroied. To conclude this point, since probably by this great motiue we are induced to beleeue that the end is at hand, and that the day and houre thereof is vncertaine, it should stirre vs vp to a more holy course of life, lest that our desolation and confusion ouertake vs vnawares.

But to the end that wee may the better vnderstand and beleeue, what hath beene before shewed, the word of God is a most firme argument to informe vs of the truth of Christs sudden comming, and that this present Age, is the last Age of the world; for the Spirit expressly saith: 1 Timoth 4. That in the latter end some shall depart from the Faith, giuing heed to seducing spirits, and Doctrines of Deuills, speaking lyes in Hypocrisie, and hauing their conscience seared with an hot iron, &c. And againe, know this also, That in

the last dayes perillous times shall come; for men will bee louers of their owne selues, couetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to Parents, vnthankefull, vnholy, without naturall affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, despisers of those that are good, high-minded, louers of pleasure more than of God, hauing the forme of godlinesse, but denying the power thereof.

Thus farre the Apostle, which words S. Cyprian handling, saith, All things that were foretold, are fulfilled, and the end of the world drawing neere: The Prophesies are come to passe, both in respect of the men, and the mindes; for now (if euer) is the perfection, or rather imperfection of all the sinnes, the Apostle names to bee the fore-runners of the end. Why doubt wee then, that the end is not at hand, or why feare we not rather, that a sudden end will preuent our procrastinated Repentance? As bodies are sicke before death, and as infirmity and sicknesse are the true fore-runners of a separation betweene the Body and the Soule: Euen so fareth it with the world, it now langnisheth, and is corrupt, it now lies sicke, and therefore it must needes come to confusion, and to an end. For

deadly

deadly ſickneſſe is a fore-runner of death; all things now ſuffer their defect, and let no man wonder at it, for man now is borne in ſuch defect, in reſpect of the birth of man in former times: but what is wanting in the preſent condition of mans body, is ſupplied in the faculties of his minde, and what is defective in the ſtrength of his members, is compleat in the ripeneſſe of his underſtanding, which is for the moſt part implyed not in liberall, but in diuelliſh arts; not in the ſtudy of learning, but of pleaſure. Onely wit and maturity is reſident in man, the onely Idea and repreſentment of the Image of God in man. What can we otherwiſe but thinke, that the time is at hand, wherein mortality ſhall put on immortality; wherein the burthen of the fleſh being laid aſide, the glorious body of the Church ſhall bee coupled to her glorious head, the communication of Saints ſhal be conſummate, and Chriſt ſhall inioy his Spouſe in continuall loue and vnion? In the meane time with Paul, Vnhappy men that we are, who ſhall deliuer vs from this body of death, that wee may paſſe ſecure to the body of life. Rom. 4. 24

Then let euery good Chriſtian in theſe wicked times wherein deſtruction hangs ouer our heads, with good Hezekiah pray,

Lord

Lord I am oppressed, doe thou vndertake for me; and since the day of destruction is so néere vs, wee intreat thée since it is expedient for vs, that thou wouldest teach vs
Psal. 39. so to number our dayes that we may apply our hearts to wisedome: And since thou hast pronounced that seruant happy, who his Master when he came, found vigilant and watchfull: Grant, Lord, we beseech
Luk. 12. 37 thée, that since it is manifest, that long it cannot bée before thou come, that wée may bée fitted and prepared for thy comming, and bée found with oyle in our Lampes, and so in happinesse enter thy Bride-chamber with ioy: and let vs, good Lord, thinke the Day most neere, lest while the day of death or iudgement bée thought to be farre off, it preuent the improuident, and while long life is expected, it quickly forsake the wicked and guilty persons. Our mindes are very desirous, if we could, to know the day of death, and dissolution. But if wee could attaine to the knowledge thereof, what would it profit vs, suppose the consummation of this world to be after ten, twenty, or forty, or a hundred yeeres, what is this materiall? is not the terme of life the consummation of each man? Why then are thou so troubled about the last day of iudgement, since

is thy end leaues thée, Iudgement shall find thée, and how suddenly death shal find thee, thou art altogether ignorant: For as in other things not regarding things pertaining to our soules, wee altogether are busied in things common, saying: This man is an Adulterer, this man a Theefe, this man a false-hearted fellow, that man proud, but no man hath a care or feeling of his owne sins far worse.

So doth euery man neglecting his owne end; he would faine learne when the generall day of dissolution shall be, which Day whether it be néere or farre off, it doth nothing concerne vs, so each man regard his euerall end. For since thou art borne, 'tis most certaine thou must dye, and it is certain after death commeth, that Iudgment may be far off, yet thy last day is at hand. Therefore prepare thee for this day: for if this day find thée vnprouided, the day of Iudgment shall find thée so likewise, when thou shalt rue for it: Consider this all yee that forget God, lest he teare you in péeces, and there bee none to helpe: For our God shall goe, and shal not kéepe silence. A fire shall come before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him, for God himselfe is Iudge. And the Day of Iudgement will quickly be at hand, preuent Psalm. 50.

nent the speede thereof: It will spéedil
come, preuent it I say, bée thou spéedil
conuerted. And as the Prophet Dauid
aduiseth vs, let vs runne before the fac
of the Iudge, with confession of our fault
and true contrition for the same. And th
reason why thou knowest not his com
ming is, that thou mayest alwayes be pre
pared for it: for it is in thine owne powe
how thou mayest expect his comming, h
therefore defers his comming, that whe
he comes he may not daunt thée. Behold
hée is not yet come, he is in Heauen, thou
art on earth; he deferres his comming, do
not thou deferre this time of repentance
lest it for euer, though too late, repent th
of his comming: For in that day, it wil
be too late to repent; therefore pray no
that his Kingdome come, which thou fea
rest comming, but rather correct thy selfe
that thou pray not against thy selfe: T
day hee cals vpon thee, that hée may not
in that day condemne thee. He that shall
then be thy Iudge, is now thine aduocate
and hée now cals vpon thee, that thou
wouldest leade a godly life. Let vs there
fore set the day of Iudgement before ou
eyes, which way soeuer wée goe, let vs
carry the memory of it with vs, and it
will bring this profit with it, that we shall
not

not onely meditate on the horrour and destruction of that day, but also wish for the accomplishing of the same, which makes the wicked to tremble when they heare it approacheth.

Thus Chrysostome saith: Let vs from among our selues repeat these things, and with others, there shall be a resurrection, a day of Iudgement, and a time of examination for all our workes, whether good or bad: and this will cause that the minds both of good and bad, be not conuersant in the vanities and pleasures of this world, and bee not tempted to any wickednesse, but rather to vndergoe any thing to be imposed vpon them here, than to incurre the fore-seene punishment of euerlasting fire hereafter.

This made Dauid cry out: Establish my flesh in thy feare, for I haue been afraid to heare thy iudgements. To conclude this point since wee all must appeare before the Iudgement-seat of Christ, that euery one may receiue the thing done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad, and knowing the terror and Iustice of the Iudge of al men, that shall iudge the World in righteousnesse, and considering the punishment that then shall be imposed on the wicked:

That

That ſhall be turned into Hell with them that forget God. Let vs heare and follow S. Hillaries aduiſe, In all the courſe of our liues, the memory of the laſt and great Iudgement is to be planted and grafted in our hearts, for happy is that man that doth what he muſt doe in remembrance of the laſt day, and why? heare the words of Ieſus the ſonne of Sirach; Whatſoeuer thou taketſt in hand, remember thy end, and thou ſhalt neuer doe amiſſe. Eccl. 7. 36

Thus much ſhall ſuffice, there ſhall bee a day of Iudgement, and that that Day is nére: Now ſomewhat remaineth to bee ſpoken of the manner of this Day, and the terrour thereof, that the wicked being touched with the vnderſtanding of the ſame, might be driuen nearer to God: In that day (ſaith S. Paul) euery mans worke ſhall be made manifeſt, for the day ſhall declare it, becauſe it ſhall be reuealed by the fire, and the fire ſhall try euery mans worke of what ſort it is. The time is now come when Iudgement muſt begin at the houſe of God, and if it firſt beginnes with vs, what ſhall the end be of them that obey not the Goſpell of God? and if the righteous ſcarcely be ſaued, where ſhall the vngodly and ſinner appeare? where will they hide themſelues in that terrible

day, wherein there shall be nothing, but weeping and gnashing of teeth, howling, lamentation, and repentance too too late: when the foundations of the mountaines shall bee moued, and the land shall bee burnt with fire; when as S. Peter saith, The Heauens shal passe away with a great noyse, and the firmament shall melt with feruent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt vp: when, as God himselfe said in the Gospell: The Mat.24.29
Moone shall be darkened, the Moone shall not giue her light, the Stars shall fall from Heauen, and the powers thereof shall be shaked: Where will the wicked then behold themselues, where will Adulterers, Drunkards, where will cursers and sweaters appeare: where will the luxurious, deceiuers, proud, vncleane and filthy persons be found: what, vnhappy as they are, can they then plead for themselues, to appease the anger of the iust Iudge of heauen and earth: surely nothing. Howle ye therefore, O ye wicked that forget God, for the day of the Lord is at hand, and it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty; for the Lord shall lay the Land desolate, and shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it, he will punish the world for their euill, and the wicked for their

iniquity

iniquity, hee will cause the arrogancie o
the proud to cease, and will lay low the
hautnesse of the ambitious worldling;
what feare, and what horror, what terro
and amazement shall there seize vpon, an
possesse those that are marked out for eter
nall destruction? In the Name of God le
vs therfore while we haue time, rouze our
selues vp; whyles there is time, let vs co
rect and amend our selues that wee neue
be brought to these Tortures of body an
soul. Let vs rather preferring the simpl
city of the Doue, and the chastity of th
Turtle, with the spirituall feathers o
graces, lift our soules vp into heauen b
our prayers, that so wee may be alwaye
ready to resigne our soules and bodies int
the hands of our Redeemer, with toy an
alarrity of spirit.

But that wee may the better heare an
understand the terror of that day, to auoid
the same, wee will heare the Prophets
what they foretell. Gird your selues and
lament you priests, how ye ministers o
the Altar, lie all night in sackcloath ye
Ministers of my God: For the meate-of
fering, and the drinke-offering, is with
holden from the house of God. Alasse
for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as
destructiō from the Almighty shal it come

Blow

Blow a trumpet in Zion, and ſound an alarum in thy holy mountaine, let al the inhabitants of the land tremble: For the day of the Lord commeth, for it is nigh at hand; a day of darknes and of gloomings, a day of clouds, and thicke darkneſſe; for great is the day of the Lord, and very terrible, ſure tis a great day wherein ſo great a God greatly to be praiſed, and to be feared aboue all gods, ſhal come to iudgement, and to reward all men for their doings. Tis a great day, after which there ſhall bee no change of time, no courſe of dayes ſhal follow; which day in it ſelfe ſhal contatne either everlaſting condemnation, or ſaluation without end.

It is a very terrible day, and the Prophet Malachy, ſeemes to giue the reaſon of it. For behold, the day commeth, that ſhall burne as an Oven, and all the proud, and al that doe wickedly, ſhall be as ſtubble, and that day that cõmeth ſhall burne them vp, ſaith the Lord of hoſts; leauing them neither root nor branch: And as the Prophet Dauid hath it. Our God ſhall come, and ſhall not keepe ſilence, a fire ſhall deuoure before him, and it ſhall be very tempeſtuous round about him, he ſhall call to the heauen from aboue, and to the earth below, that he may iudge his people. For

God is Iudge himselfe; who, therefore will endure the fury of this day, where the strong shall be thus weakned & oppressed, and where the proud, and all that doe wickedly, shal be burnt vp as stubble? who will not stand astonish'd, where the rot with the branch shall be plucked vp and consumed? what wicked man, what sinner then dareth to appeare where the iust shal scarse be saued? But many men, partly out of dull stupidity, and partly being oppressed with crosses and vexations of this life, do little esteeme of the terror of this last day, and do seeme as being prepared for this day, very earnestly to wish and desire the same: But the Prophet Amos 5. 18. doth threaten these men, saying, Wo vnto you that desire the day of the Lord, to what end is it for you? The day of the Lord is darknes, and not light, as if a man did fly from a Lyon, and a Beare met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wal, and a Serpent bit him. You doe, saith he, very ill to your selues, in that you doe so rashly desire the day of the Lord, for yee shall not walke in the light of Gods countenance, because yee haue not beene children of the light, but children of darknes. There may some darknes shall come vpon you, whatsoeuer you shall then assay, you shall not

Per. 4.

shun

shun terror, you cannot auoid horror: and if you may shunne the face of the Lyon of the Tribe of Iudah, that you render not accompt for your sins; yet that Beare the Deuill will ronne vpon you, meete you and punish you for the same. Or if you scape this Beare, and enter into the house of your conscience to consider the euils you haue committed, and the good you haue omitted, the tormenting worme will seize vpon your conscience, the worm that Esay 66. speaketh of, The worme shal neuer dy: And the Euangelist Marke 9. did testifie the same; Their worme dieth not, their fire neuer goeth out, their torments are endlesse, neither is there in that day any partiality to be vsed. For the Kings of the earth, Gentlemen, the rich men, the great & chiefe Captaines, the mighty men euery bond-man and euery free-man, shall hide themselues in the dens, and in the rockes of the mountaines, & shall say to the rocks and mountains fal on vs, and hide vs from the face of him that sitteth on the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lambe. For the great day of wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand. But when the Son of man shall come in the Maiesty of his glory, and the holy Angels with him, before whom all Nations shall be gathered:

He shall then separate them one from another, as the shepheard diuideth his sheepe from the Goats, and he shall set his sheepe on his right hand, and the goats on the left hand; and the King shall say to them on the right hand, Mat, 25. Come yee blessed of my father, inherit the Kingdome prepared for you from the beginning of the world: but to them on the left hand hee shall say; Depart from me you wicked into euerlasting fire, prepared for the diuell & his angels, and those shall goe into euerlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternall. To conclude this point heare the Counsell of our Sauiour Christ: Take heed, lest at any time your hearts be ouercharged with surfeting and drunkennesse, and cares of this life, and so that day come vpon vs vnawares. For as a snare, it shall come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth: watch yee, and pray alwayes, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to passe, and to stand before the Sonne of man. Since therefore all these things are suddenly expected to be fulfilled, and all that reade the Scriptures may heare this, both from Prophets and Apostles, nay, and Christ himselfe: That it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the liuing God; It

Luke 21.34

is

is a wonder, that since all things (as the Apostle saith) shall be dissolued, that now at length we become not pure, and walke in an holy conuersation and godlinesse, lo-king for, and hasting vnto the comming of the day of God. Wherein the Heauens being on fire, shall be dissolued, and the ele-ments shall melt with feruent heat. It is a wonder that we doe not deny all vngod-lines, and worldly desires, and lusts of the flesh, the glory of the world, the deceitful-nesse of riches, and the choaking cares of all earthly things, and exercise our selues in all sobriety and godlinesse, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appea-rance of that great God, and our Sauiour Iesus Christ. It ought therefore to be our first and chiefest care, in these dangerous and wicked times, not being drowned in the imployments of this world, to haue a care of our owne saluation, and to make sure the anchor of our hope and faith, that our soules suffer not eternall shipwracke. Let vs not perswade our selues that the Lord is not neer. Let vs not say with them that Peter reprehended; where is the pro-mise of his comming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were since the Creation: for how long these things shall continue, the Lord of Hosts

2 Pet. 3. 11

Tit. 2. 3.

by the Prophet Haggai doth declare. Yet once, it is a little while, and I wil shake the heauens and the earth, the Sea, and the dry land. Now the Apostle Peter giues the reason why he is not yet come. 'Tis his long suffering, saith he, to vs-wards, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come vnto repentance; wherefore account that the long suffering of the Lord is salvation, and be diligent, that you may bee found of him in peare, without spot and blameiesse; we must be diligent & watchfull: the Grecians are gone aside, we haue a Sinon in vs that will yéeld the place to them: we must continually watch, and haue alwayes an eye to the watch, holding our weapons in our hands, vnlesse wee be minded at all times to be surprised, and yéeld at the pleasure of our enemie. For the day of the Lord commeth as a theefe in the night, in which the Heauens shall passe away with a great noise, and the Elements shall melt with feruent heat.

a Pet. 3. 9

Therefore be yee ready, for in such an houre as you thinke not, the Sonne of man commeth. Now, they that deferre the comming of the Lord, and say with that euill seruant, My Lord delayeth his comming, Let vs eate and drinke, be drunken, let them know, The Lord will come

in

in a day when they looke not for him, and in an houre when they are not aware, and will cut them asunder, and will giue them their portion with the vnbeleeuers & Hypocrites; where there shal be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Now, they that know these things, and prepare not themselues, neither doe according to the Will of God, shall be beaten with many stripes: as the same Apostle Saint Luke hath in his Gospel pronounced. Let vs endeauour therefore, that when the last day cometh, we may say with S. Paul: I haue fought a good fight, I haue finished my course; I haue kept the Faith: henceforth there is laid vp for me a crowne of righteousnesse, which the Lord that righteous Iudge shall giue me that day: but is this crowne laid vp for thee alone (O Paul) not onely for mée (he saith) but also for them that loue the Lord Iesus, and expect his appearance. Luk. 12. 3

2 Tim. 4. 7

Oh that this would take some impression in the hardest of hearts, that doe sing a temporall requietem here vnto their soules, lest while they think the day of the Lord farthest from them, it on the sudden come vpon them, and so they be found in a condition too late to be amended, and by no meanes whatsoeuer to be auoided.

To conclude all, gird vp the loynes of your mindes, be sober, and hope to the end for the glory that is to be brought to you at the reuelation of Iesus Christ, as obedient children, not walking after your former lusts of ignorance, let your loynes, I say, be girded, and your lights burning, and you your selues like vnto them that wait
Luk. 12. 15 for the Lord, when he wil return from the wedding, that when he cõmeth and knocketh, you may open immediatly: blessed is the seruant, whom, his Master when hee cõmeth finds so doing, of a truth, I say vnto you, he will make him ruler ouer all he hath. Take ye heed, watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is. For the sonne of man is as a man taking a far iourney, who left his house, and gaue authority to his seruants, and to euery man his worke commanding them to watch: Watch ye therefore, for ye know not when the Master commeth, at euen, at mid-night, or at the cock crowing, lest comming suddenly, he finde you sleeping, and so cast you into prison, there to remaine world without end. From which, the Lord Iesus keepe vs all, and that for his mercy sake alone. To whom be rendred all honour, glory, praise and thanksgiuing, now and for euer, Amen.

FINIS.